

September 21, 2015



Honorable Kurt Heise, Chair
Michigan House Criminal Justice Committee
Anderson House Office Building
124 North Capitol Avenue
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Rep. Heise and Members of the House Criminal Justice Committee:

The American Association of University Women of Michigan, in keeping with its national Public Policy Program to support choice in the determination of one's reproductive life and freedom from violence and fear of violence, **opposes HB 4787 and 4830** without significant amendments in keeping with the following comments.

- Neither men nor women should be coerced by another into a decision to continue or terminate a pregnancy. Reproductive coercion is a subset of the broader issue of domestic and sexual violence, the root of coercion. These bills are one-sided in that they criminalize only coercion to terminate a pregnancy rather than even-handedly covering the whole array of reproductive coercion.
- These bills do not assure sufficiently that freedom of expression is protected for those with whom a pregnant woman consults or tells about her pregnancy. The bills set up parents (especially parents of minors or parents of dependent children with majority status), friends, associates, and medical professionals for liability or prosecution if the pregnant woman considers that the advice given in support of the abortion option had a coercive quality. The definitions are too vague in the bill.
- Michigan's existing informed consent law already requires that a woman's consent to abortion must be given freely without coercion. These bills are duplicative and unnecessary.

The AAUW's goal is to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research. The AAUW is the nation's leading voice promoting equity and education for women and girls. Since its founding in 1881, AAUW members have examined and taken positions on the fundamental issues of the day — educational, social, economic, and political. The AAUW is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that has more than 170,000 members and supporters, 1,000 local branches, and 800 college and university partners around the world.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Mary Pollock'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Mary Pollock
Government Relations Coordinator

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